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The Department of Justice Creates Section Dedicated to Denaturalization Cases

The Civil Division's Denaturalization Section Will Investigate and Litigate the Denaturalization of Terrorists, War Criminals, Sex Offenders, and Other Fraudsters

The Department of Justice today announced the creation of a section dedicated to investigating and litigating revocation of naturalization. The Denaturalization Section will join the existing sections within the Civil Division's Office of Immigration Litigation—the District Court Section and the Appellate Section. This move underscores the Department's commitment to bring justice to terrorists, war criminals, sex offenders, and other fraudsters who illegally obtained naturalization.

While the Office of Immigration Litigation already has achieved great success in the denaturalization cases it has brought, winning 95 percent of the time, the growing number of referrals anticipated from law enforcement agencies motivated the creation of a standalone section dedicated to this important work.

"When a terrorist or sex offender becomes a U.S. citizen under false pretenses, it is an affront to our system—and it is especially offensive to those who fall victim to these criminals," said Assistant Attorney General Jody Hunt. "The Denaturalization Section will further the Department's efforts to pursue those who unlawfully obtained citizenship status and ensure that they are held accountable for their fraudulent conduct."

Denaturalization cases require the government to show that a defendant's naturalization was "illegally procured" or "procured by concealment of a material fact or by willful misrepresentation . . ." 8 U.S.C. § 1451. Civil denaturalization cases have no statute of limitations, and the Department has successfully denaturalized numerous categories of individuals who have illegally obtained citizenship, including terrorists and other national security threats, war criminals, human rights violators, sex offenders, and other fraudsters.

National Security/Terrorism

- *U.S. v. al Dahab*, No. 15-cv-5414 (D.D.C.). Successful civil denaturalization of individual convicted of terrorism offenses in Egypt who admitted recruiting for al Qaeda within the United States and running a communications hub in California for the Egyptian Islamic Jihad terrorist organization. The defendant was denaturalized while in Egypt, stripped of his passport, and prevented from returning to the United States.

- *U.S. v. Kariye*, No. 15-cv-1343 (D. Or.). Successful civil denaturalization of individual who received military training in a jihadist training camp in Afghanistan; coordinated with Osama bin Laden and other known terrorist leaders; and was associated with terrorist organizations including Makhtab Al-Khidamat, a U.S. government-designated terrorist organization and pre-cursor to al Qaeda. The Office of Immigration Litigation coordinated a settlement that facilitated the defendant's self-deportation to Somaliland despite his presence on No Fly List.
- *U.S. v. Hamed*, No. 2:18-cv-0424 (W.D. Mo.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual convicted of conspiring to illegally transfer more than \$1 million to Iraq in violation of federal sanctions and of obstructing internal revenue laws with respect to tax-exempt charities. In furtherance of those crimes, the defendant regularly authorized and transferred tax-exempt funds from a non-profit organization's accounts in the United States to an account in Jordan controlled by a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

War Crimes & Human Rights Violators

- *U.S. v. Dzeko*, No. 18-cv-759 (D.D.C.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual who was convicted in Bosnia of executing eight unarmed civilians and POWs during the Balkans conflict. Defendant was denaturalized while incarcerated in a Bosnian prison, and thereby prevented from returning to the United States upon his release.
- *U.S. v. Yetisen*, No. 18-cv-570 (D. Or.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual who pled guilty in Bosnia of executing six unarmed civilians and POWs during the Balkans conflict.

Sex Offenders

- *U.S. v. Omopariola* (N.D. Tex.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual engaged in sexual contact with a 7-year-old family member.
- *U.S. v. Lopez*, No. 18-cv-00527 (D. Md.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual who sexually abused a minor victim for multiple years.
- *U.S. v. Arizmendi*, No. 4:15-cv-454 (S.D. Tex.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual convicted of multiple sex offenses, including as to students. The defendant was denaturalized while incarcerated in a Mexican prison related to a sex offense, and thereby prevented from returning to the United States upon his release.

Fraudsters & Other Criminals

- *U.S. v. Mondino*, No. 18-cv-21840 (S.D. Fla.). Successful civil denaturalization of an individual convicted of conspiring to defraud the U.S. Export-Import Bank of more than \$24 million, resulting in more than \$12 million in unrecovered losses. Because of the denaturalization proceedings, the defendant self-deported.
- *U.S. v. Warsame* cases, Nos. 17-cv-5023, -5024, -5025, -5027 (D. Minn.). Successful civil denaturalizations of four individuals who fraudulently claimed to be a family to gain admission to the United States through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program.

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